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ABSTRACT

Minimal communication-between school and home was found to contribute to low performance by students at McDuffie High School (South Carolina). This report describes the experience of establishing a computer-based telephone messaging system in the high school and involving parents, teachers, and students in its use. Additional strategies employed to increase communication were: parent training; creation of a parent center in the school; teacher training; and increased school, home, and community interaction. Survey results at the end of nine weeks of system use indicated a positive increase in school/home communication and in provision of classroom information by teachers, although only one of six expected outcomes was achieved. Conventional surveys were subsequently used during the nine-month practicum period to assess teacher and student use of the messaging system. Electronic surveys assessed parent and community satisfaction with messaging systems as information sources. Appended are a caller directory/guide; survey forms for assessing system use by parents, students, and teachers; and scripts for conducting electronic surveys. (Author)

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Using a Computer-based Messaging System at a High School to Increase School/Home Communication

by

Mitzi K. Burden

Cluster 59

A Practicum II Report Presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University
1995

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This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: Jacky R. Stamps

Jacky R. Stamps
Principal

Title

McDuffie High School

Address

November 28, 1995

Date

This practicum report was submitted by Mitzi K. Burden under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

2-2-96
Date of Final Approval of Report

C. L. Kahle
Carol L. Kahle, Ed.D., Adviser

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ABSTRACT

Using a Computer-based Messaging System at a High School to Increase School/Home Communication. Burden, Mitzi K., 1995: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University. Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. School/Home Communication / Parent/Teacher Communication / Technology / Messaging Systems / Verbal bulletin boards

Minimal communication between school and home contributed to low performance by students at a high school. Increased communication was needed to obtain parental support for school success.

This report recounts the writer's experience in establishing a school messaging system and involving parents, teachers, and students in its use. Additional strategies employed to increase communication were parent training, creation of a parent center in the school, teacher training, and increased school, home, and community interaction.

Survey results at the end of nine weeks of system use indicated a positive increase in school/home communication and in provision of classroom information by teachers, although only one of six expected outcomes was achieved. Conventional surveys were subsequently used during the nine-month practicum period to assess teacher and student use of the messaging system. Electronic surveys were used to assess parent and community member satisfaction with messaging systems as information sources. Appended are a caller directory/guide; survey forms for assessing system use by parents, students, and teachers; and scripts for conducting electronic surveys.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The community is located in a small city (population 26,384), a county seat in the foothills of a mountain chain in the southeastern portion of the United States. The economy of the region has in recent years made a successful transition from the failing textile market to other industries, chiefly fiberglass and chemical plants.

There are eight smaller municipalities in the county; slightly more than half of the 148,300 inhabitants live in rural areas. The white/black ratio is almost five to one; less than 600 residents are of Hispanic origin and approximately 650 are of Asian origin. The median income per family is $31,228. Twelve percent of the population live below the poverty line, and 50.6% of families in this category are headed by single parents (S. C. Department of Education, 1994). The rate of unemployment is 5.4% (Anderson County Planning Office, 1990).

A well-known university is located 20 miles away in a northwest direction, and a lesser known university is located about 30 miles toward the northeast. Two private colleges are nearby, as well as two technical colleges that offer two-year programs.

Approximately 3.4% of county residents hold graduate or professional degrees, 14.8% hold college degrees, 15.1% attended college but did not graduate, 31.5% hold high school diplomas, 20.8% attended high school but did not graduate, and 14.4% have less than a ninth grade education (S. C. Department, 1994). The current illiteracy rate is 29.6%.

There are 47 public and 19 private schools in the county; 95.8% of the eligible children attend public schools. The average school dropout rate is 3.2% (Anderson County, 1990). Almost 20% percent of births in the county in 1993-1994 were to teenage mothers, and 26.6% of births were to mothers who had not graduated from high school (S. C. Department, 1994).

One of the county's five school districts comprises the three high, three middle, and nine elementary schools in the county seat. Total enrollment in this district of city schools during the 1993-1994 school year was 11,189. The white/black ratio was roughly two to one. Seventy-one percent of high school graduates entered college. Average standardized achievement test scores were slightly above those of the state. The school dropout rate was 4.3% (S. C. Department, 1994).

A building program to ensure uniform facilities throughout the district was completed two years ago. A restructuring program is currently in progress. Strategic plans were created in individual schools during the 1993-1994 school year, and implementation of first-year strategies has begun.

Enrollment in district schools is governed by attendance zones, with one exception. High school students may attend the traditional high school in their zone or may elect to attend a high school/career center, which is a school of choice.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The high school/career center offers academic and occupational programs to students in Grades 9 through 12. Located in a lower socioeconomic section, it is the district's only inner-city school. Racial representation is almost equal between black and white. The standardized test scores are well below the district average. The attendance rate is lower, the dropout rate higher. This school provides the practicum setting.

A full range of academic courses is offered, and special education classes serve students with special needs. Several school programs address the needs of students at risk of dropping out of school before graduation. Although the school's academic program includes honors and advanced placement courses, most collegebound students attend one of the traditional high schools. Students who plan to enroll at a nearby two-year technical college often attend the comprehensive school. A cooperative program with the technical college has been in operation for several years. Students enrolled at the other district high schools may take occupational courses at the comprehensive school several hours each school day during their junior and senior years. Although the school has traditionally been

chosen by students for its vocational emphasis, in recent years it has also become a neighborhood school for students who are not necessarily interested in occupational training.

Student enrollment at the beginning of a typical school year is about 700, but decreases substantially by year's end. The beginning figure for the 1994-1995 school year was 696; by the 16th week it was 664. The students currently enrolled exhibit diversity in learning styles, academic ability, and interests. Many students are from socioeconomically disadvantaged families. Many are growing up in families made dysfunctional by parental separation or divorce, drug abuse, or physical violence. In these troubled families little encouragement is given children to develop good study habits or to be achievers in school, and parents take little interest in their children's school activities.

The faculty comprises 49 academic and vocational teachers, 3 administrators, 2 guidance counselors and 1 library media specialist. There are twenty support staff workers.

The writer is a library media specialist who has been a member of the faculty for 16 years; her prior experience includes work in the same position at the elementary level and as a classroom teacher. She serves on the school's Faculty Council and Student Assistance Council, and was a member of the planning team that developed the strategic plan now in its first year of implementation. She has chaired the School Improvement Council for five years.

CHAPTER II
STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Communication from the school to parents consists chiefly of monthly newsletters from the principal, notification of unexcused absences, progress reports, and interim reports. Some teachers may send messages home by students or may telephone parents to solicit their help with homework completion or disruptive student behavior. Many parents do not respond to any communication from the school unless conferences are mandatory to keep their children in school. The school has tried a number of ways to interest parents in their children's school progress, including parent/teacher conference nights at which parents receive their children's progress reports and talk to their teachers. These events are poorly attended. Progress reports are sent home by students the day following parent/teacher conference nights; there is no way of knowing whether parents receive them. Little contact occurs between school and home, and almost none is initiated by parents.

There is little parent involvement in school organizations or activities. Only a few parents are willing to serve as members of advisory councils or as officers of parent organizations. It is difficult

to interest parents in attending meetings or school functions. Sports activities are better attended than meetings, but attendance by parents is low overall. Efforts by the school to involve more parents have not proved successful.

Parents often know little about their children's progress in school, but make no effort to learn more. They may be unaware of their children's difficulties in school until called for a conference. Without an understanding of their role in successful school performance by their children, parents unknowingly contribute to their children's poor achievement.

In short, the problem is one of poor communication between school and home. Improved communication is desired in order to secure parental support for student success. Students, parents, faculty, and community members are the subjects of the proposed practicum.

Problem Documentation

Results of an annual needs assessment survey administered to parents, students, and teachers in 1993 indicated that 25% of parents were unaware that the school has an annual "open house" event and 57% did not know that parents are involved in decision making at the school. Although 35 of the 38 responding teachers believed that they informed parents of their expectations for students, only 64% of parents believed this to be true. Only 57% of parents believed that

parents, students, and teachers work together to help students succeed in school.

A needs assessment survey administered the following year (1994) yielded similar results. Fewer parents (63%) than the year before (75%) knew that the school has an annual "open house" event. More parents (48%) than before (43%), but still less than half, knew that parents are involved in decision making at the school. Most teachers (33 of 38) believed that they informed parents of their expectations for their students, but only 66% of parents (2% more than the previous year) agreed. Belief by 62% of parents that parents, students, and teachers work together to improve the school was slightly higher than it had been the previous year (57%) for the three working together to help students succeed in school. Although the wording differed slightly, the meaning appears basically the same to the writer, inasmuch as the goal of school improvement would logically be increased student success.

The school is currently engaged in a restructuring program. The parents, community members, business representatives, students, and faculty members serving on the school's strategic planning team analyzed school data and, in April 1994, identified poor communication between school and home as a major school problem. Improving communication between school and home is an objective for the first year of the strategic plan.

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Causative Analysis

The existing poor communication between school and home may be caused by one or more of the following: (a) failure of the school to adequately inform parents about school programs and activities, and about ways in which parents may offer support to students; (b) failure of parents to realize that high school students need parental support in order to succeed in school; (c) reliance on students to transmit information from school to home; (d) the desire of adolescents to lead their own lives, independent of adult control; and (e) perception by students and parents of the school as a separate entity unrelated to home and community.

In the past, the school may not have made communication with parents a priority. Teachers may not have felt it necessary to contact parents of high school students except in extreme cases. Parent conferences are requested when student behavior becomes so disruptive that class control by the teacher is threatened and when students are in danger of failing courses. Progress reports have usually been the only other communication between teachers and parents. Aside from newsletters issued to parents to provide school information and to request parental participation in school organizations and activities, few other forms of communication have been tried.

Parents may be unaware that parental support is necessary for school success. Many parents who fail to provide support for their children's success in school may be following the example set by their

own parents. They may have lower expectations for children enrolled in vocational courses and, as a consequence, may fail to monitor their children's progress in academic courses. Parents of students who have jobs may not realize that encouragement to complete school assignments is especially needed for students whose free time is limited by their employment. Parents of students who are academically or behaviorally disabled may not realize that their children need constant encouragement to perform well in school.

Transmission of information from school to home has usually depended upon delivery by students. Some students may forget to take newsletters home or to tell their parents about scheduled activities. Others may decide that it is not in their best interest to do so.

Many teenagers share little personal information with their parents because of their desire to control their own lives. It is the nature of adolescents to want to assume adult roles and to want to be accountable to no one. Often parents do not know their children's friends or details of their children's activities. Some parents may welcome their teenagers' independence as a release from parental responsibilities.

Many students and parents see no relevance to students' lives in school. Family, community, church, and work are perceived as interrelated, but no connection is made with school. As a consequence, little importance is assigned to schoolwork by the

students and little interest in student achievement is shown by the parents.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Schools have a basic obligation to communicate with parents regarding their children's programs and progress (Chapman, 1991). At the high school level, most parents are satisfied with newsletters and progress reports (Sattes, 1989), or just newsletters and interim reports when academic or behavioral problems arise (Purnell & Gotts, 1983).

Parents receive most school information from students. They enjoy hearing school news from their children but also like newsletters and telephone calls as sources of information (Cattermole & Robinson, 1985). Newsletters are used more than any other method for school-to-home communication and most parents read them (Purnell & Gotts, 1983), but parents with a low level of literacy may discount newsletters as a news source (Cockrell, 1992).

It is important that good communication be established and maintained. This is necessary not only to have the support of parents regarding homework completion and classroom behavior (Sattes, 1989), but also because it promotes an improved home/school relationship that can create increased parental involvement and support of the total school program (Richardson, 1988).

Communication is one of the 10 components of parent involvement described in a handbook for Chapter I schools. Three

of the program's six goals can be supported by sharing plans with parents, teachers, and administrators: inviting suggestions, encouraging participation in activities, and disseminating information about events and activities (Keltner et al., 1990).

Successful parent involvement programs recognize that contributions made by parents to their children's education are important and that most parents are concerned about their children's education (Becher, 1984). Participation in parent organizations and volunteering in schools are interpreted as parental interest, and non-participation as lack of interest, by both teachers and children (Espinoza & Ramos-Cancel, 1985). Children whose parents are involved have a better attendance record and they achieve academically (Sattes, 1989).

It is harder for schools to involve parents of high school students than it is to involve parents of younger students (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988) because many parents, at the high school level, want only to be informed (Cattermole & Robinson, 1985). A recent study by the research organization Child Trends found that almost half of all parents do not attend any school functions at the high school level (New Report, 1994). Families with two natural parents participate most in school activities, and single parents participate least. Teachers have little contact with most parents, but more contact with parents of students who have discipline problems and with parents who have indicated a desire to help their children learn (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988).

Both school-to-home and home-to-school communication are important for an effective school program (Gotts & Purnell, 1984). Two purposes of parent/teacher/student conferences at the high school level are to assure parents of teachers' genuine interest in students' progress and to communicate information to them (Wyatt, 1985). In schools where parent/teacher/student conferences are not generally held, teachers and parents can be encouraged to exchange information leading to better understanding by parents of their role in their children's learning (Swap, 1990). The principal must encourage teachers to communicate more effectively with their students' parents (Parker, 1991). Unfortunately, teacher attitudes toward parents are often responsible for parents not feeling welcome in schools (Chrispeels, 1991). Some teachers feel uncomfortable talking to parents (Arizona State, 1989), and need to work harder at communicating with them. Some parents may be unwilling to talk to teachers because of their own negative school experiences (Ariz. State, 1989). Parents will not respond if they do not feel respected and welcome (Swap, 1990). In order to gain their trust, teachers must model openness (Martin, 1992). Pleasant social encounters and exchange of information are essential to build trust between parents and teachers. In addition, training for both teachers and parents is needed to improve communication skills; both should communicate clearly and honestly (Swap, 1990).

Minority parents show more hesitancy about interacting with school personnel than other parents (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988).

Extra effort should be made to provide a welcoming atmosphere for such parents. Unless an effort is made to understand the educational experiences and family expectations of culturally different students, little involvement by parents of such students is likely to occur (Chrispeels, 1991).

Parental feelings of despair over negative life circumstances may be interpreted as lack of concern or lack of cooperation (Davis, 1991). Parents must be encouraged to appreciate their own worth in contributing to the education of their children. Some parents view their own abilities negatively and must first realize that they are capable of helping their children to learn (Cochran, 1991). Many times parents do not take an active part in their children's learning because they doubt their own ability to teach. Although parents of elementary students can probably assist their children more in learning, parents of high school students can be given tips on encouraging their children to learn. These parents can be advised to say positive things about school, show an interest in what their children are doing in school, and listen to what their children say. Children of any age need to be praised for doing well. They need behavior guidelines they are required to follow, and regular household routines. Parents need to be told of the necessity to provide a definite place for studying in addition to books and supplies (Bristor, 1987).

The entrance of a child into high school creates uncertainty and apprehension in parents as well as children. Teachers can help ease

the transition by communicating constructive, positive information to parents often (Arizona State Department of Education, 1989).

Parents want to be involved in their children's education (Nardine, 1991), but need to be told what to do (Sattes, 1989). They need to understand that their role in their children's learning is essential to student growth and improvement (Steventon, 1990). Parents can learn to increase their academic expectations for their children, thereby improving both self-concept and scholastic achievement (Sattes, 1989).

Cattermole and Robinson (1985) found that parents of high school students prefer that major decisions be made by school authorities. Williams (cited in Henderson, 1988), however, reported that parents want to participate in decision making, even though some administrators and teachers want them to participate only in such traditional ways as holding bake sales or attending school functions. Goldring (1993) stated that parents cooperate better with principals who do more than socialize with them. Parents should be encouraged to share in decision making as partners in their children's learning.

Administrators and teachers who understand that educational and social problems are at a critical stage are reaching out to the community for help. In some states, the department of education has a grant program devoted to improvement of school/family connections (Paths, 1991). Laws should be enacted in all states, and sufficient funds and personnel should be provided to enable school districts to establish parent involvement programs in all schools (Nardine, 1991).

Programs should promote parent involvement in helping children learn and teacher involvement in explaining to parents what children are learning at school (Solomon, 1991).

Two ways suggested by a U. S. Department of Education report (cited in Dismuke, 1994) to encourage family involvement in schools are scheduling evening meetings and using new technologies such as voice mail to communicate to parents after school hours. The use of technology can be very beneficial in supplying school information for parents (Levinson, 1990).

One of the greatest benefits from schools and homes working together is the perception that learning does not take place only at school (Emblem, cited in Bristor, 1987). In order to connect school, family, and community in the minds of students, parents, and school personnel alike, the school newsletter should include information about community activities (Arrowsmith, 1990).

Three common themes among nationally known school programs that require parental involvement include assuming that all children can learn, serving the physical, emotional, and social as well as academic needs of children, and sharing responsibility for meeting those needs among families, schools, and community agencies (Davies, 1991). Human services should be available at school so that needs of all children might be met. To ensure a successful program linking human services with schools, both teachers and parents should be involved (Ascher, 1990). In addition, volunteer service by

community members should be encouraged; it can prove beneficial for both students and volunteers (Schreter, 1991).

School improvement teams should investigate new ways to meet the needs of all students. Programs should include partnerships with higher education institutions as well as community services (Meixner, 1994).

Involvement of the school in the community can take the form of community service by students. Participation in some type of community service helps young people to develop a heightened sense of personal and social responsibility, as well as more positive attitudes toward others (Conrad & Hedin, 1989).

CHAPTER III
ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

Goal and Expectations

Increased communication between home and school is the desired goal.

Expected Outcomes

The following six outcomes are expected by the end of the implementation period:

1. Increased perception by parents that school information is comprehensive and easily accessible.
2. Increased perception by parents that teacher expectations for students are communicated to them.
3. Increased teacher involvement in making details of homework and classroom activities available to parents.
4. Increased perception by parents of the school as a partner in working for student success.
5. Increased parental interest in school activities and events.
6. Increased interaction between school and community.

The first expected outcome is that parents will be aware that they may obtain school news without difficulty and that it is sufficiently informative. Needs assessment survey results indicated that many parents are not receiving or not reading information relating to scheduled school functions, as well as information relating to parent participation in school governance.

The second expected outcome is that parents will agree that they are given teacher expectations for their children. Results of needs assessment surveys indicated that approximately one third of the parents do not believe that teacher expectations are communicated to them.

The third expected outcome is that teachers will make homework assignments and news about classroom activities available to parents. Details of classroom activities are not currently available for parents except as reported to them by their children. Students receive their homework assignments from their teachers in class, but this information is not readily available for parents.

The fourth expected outcome is that parents will begin to consider their association with the school to be a partnership formed to help children succeed academically. Parents whose only school information takes the form of occasional newsletters, progress reports, interim reports, and comments by their children very likely cannot appreciate the variety of methods used by a school to encourage student success.

The fifth expected outcome is that parents will become more interested in school activities and events as a result of increased dissemination of information by the school. Parents who do not know about school functions cannot be expected to attend. Those who do not know about planned school activities in time to make arrangements for child care or other needs that would facilitate their participation cannot attend. Some parents may want to be informed about happenings at school even though they are not interested in attending school functions.

The sixth expected outcome is that the school will become more involved in community activities and services. There is minimal interaction between the school and the community at the present time. Cooperation between community service organizations and the school occurs from time to time, primarily to invite student participation in programs such as the United Way Campaign. Classes sometimes participate in community improvement projects such as one in which horticulture students planted shrubs to help beautify a rundown business section. Occurrences such as these are isolated and are not generally recognized outside the school. There is one school/community service program that involves personnel from a county drug and alcohol agency coming into the school, but none that takes students out into the community.

Measurement of Outcomes

The writer will conduct an evaluation following the

implementation period to determine whether projected outcomes have been achieved. Results, evaluation tools, and standards of achievement follow:

1. By the end of the implementation period, there will be a perception by 75% of responding parents that school information is comprehensive and easily accessible, as shown by results of a teacher-made survey (see Appendix A).

2. By the end of the implementation period, 80% of responding parents will believe they are informed of teacher expectations for their children, as shown by results of the annual needs assessment survey.

3. By the end of the implementation period, there will be increased teacher involvement in making details of classroom activities and homework assignments available, as shown by 38 of the 51 teachers in the school engaging in regularly scheduled dissemination of information as documented in a record kept by the writer.

4. By the end of the implementation period, there will be a perception by 75% of responding parents of the school as a partner in working for student success, as shown by results of the annual needs assessment survey.

5. By the end of the implementation period, there will be increased parental interest in school programs and activities resulting from dissemination of school information as reported

by 80% of responding parents on a teacher-made survey (see Appendix A).

6. By the end of the implementation period, there will be a perception by 8 of 10 parents of increased interaction between the school and the community resulting from dissemination of school information as shown by results of a teacher-made survey (see Appendix A).

CHAPTER IV
SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The problem to be addressed by this practicum was that poor communication existed between school and home. Increased communication was desired in order to enlist parental support for school success.

A number of possible solutions were suggested in the literature to increase communication between home and school. The following suggestions appeared especially worthy of consideration:

1. Keeping parents better informed (Becher, 1984) is a necessity if good communication is to be established.

2. Creation of a parent center in the school can encourage in parents a feeling of ownership in their children's education (Davies (1991).

3. Parent training (Warner, 1991) may be necessary to enlist the help of parents in encouraging their children to succeed in school.

4. Building parent self-esteem and trust in schools (Cockrell, 1992) makes parents aware that they are capable of

helping their children learn and enables them to overcome negative attitudes toward school.

5. Teacher training (Chrispeels, 1991) may be necessary to ensure that teachers understand how to make parents feel welcome and how to encourage parents to share information.

6. The best methods of school-to-home communication are newsletters (Cattermole & Robinson, 1985), teacher telephone calls to parents (Arizona, 1989), and messages recorded by teachers (Bauch, 1989; Cottle, 1991; D'Angelo, 1991, Swick, 1991).

7. Both school-to-home and home-to-school communication are necessary for an effective school program (Gotts & Purnell, 1984).

8. Better communication can be obtained by interaction among home, school, and community (Becher, 1984).

These ideas were generated by the literature:

1. Inviting parents to respond to information disseminated by the school could encourage home-to-school communication.

2. Training ninth grade parents could increase support for school success by their children throughout their high school years.

3. Both student involvement in community service and volunteer service in the school by community members could

be encouraged and recognized to increase interaction between the school and the community.

4. Community support of the school could be sought by publicizing details of school/community cooperation.

5. Parents could be encouraged to support school improvement at the state and local levels.

Description of Selected Solution

The severity of the problem created in the writer's school by declining standardized test scores, student lack of motivation, and poor student attendance demanded that parental help be enlisted. In communicating with parents, it is imperative that school information be made available (Becher, 1984).

Through the use of technology it is possible to provide school information in a format that may be accessed by telephone 24 hours a day. Levinson (1990) stated that definition of a problem and selection of possible solutions should dictate whether technology will be used to help solve the problem. Technology should be used when it can do a job better than the job can be done without using technology (Harrington, 1984). In this instance, school information was not being received in many homes. Having teachers contact parents by telephone was a possible solution, but an impractical one because of the number of students taught by each teacher at the high school level. The predominant method recommended in the literature for provision of school news to parents and students after school hours was through

the use of a computer-based telephone messaging system (Bauch, 1989; Cottle, 1991; U. S. Department of Education, 1993). Advantages of using a system of this type include the following: (a) parents whose literacy level prevents their reading newsletters may listen to school news, (b) homework assignments may be accessed daily by parents and students, and (c) information may be accessed at the caller's convenience.

Citing results of the 1993 parent needs assessment survey, the writer had obtained a state teacher grant that provided approximately 80% of the purchase price of a computer-based telephone messaging system to increase school-to-home communication. The school principal had supplemented the grant with school funds.

After evaluation of possible solutions found in the literature, the writer decided to use a combination of methods to increase communication between home and school. The solution strategy included (a) use of a computer-based telephone messaging system, (b) parent training, (c) establishment of a parent center in the school, (d) teacher training, and (e) increased school/home/community interaction.

Use of a computer-based telephone messaging system

The writer prepared to implement the use of a computer-based telephone messaging system to provide school information and homework assignments to callers. Teachers were to record homework assignments, details of classroom activities, and ideas to

help parents encourage learning in the home. Occupational teachers were to prepare messages explaining their courses for access during the summer by upcoming ninth grade students and their parents as they consider traditional school programs and those offered at the comprehensive school. The writer planned to record school information messages initially, and to enlist school personnel, parents, and students to participate later. Callers were to be encouraged to respond to messages by telephoning the school media center.

A system-generated activities log was to be kept as an accurate record of use. Such a log records the total number of telephone calls made to the messaging system, the number of times each message cell is accessed, total number of message cells accessed, and peak hours of system usage. The writer planned to be responsible for monitoring the system, to analyze the system-generated activities log, and to complete an evaluation report for submission to the state teacher grant program office.

Parent training

The cooperation of parents was essential in the effort to increase communication. The writer planned to instruct a group of ninth grade parents, including an officer of the school's parent/teacher/student organization and a homemaker, in the use of the messaging system. They were to be asked to assist other parents in learning how to access school information. In addition, they were to be encouraged to contribute information for messages, to post

messages, and to suggest other ways to improve communication between home and school.

Establishment of a parent center in the school

Few parents visited the writer's school to observe classes or to talk to teachers. The writer planned to establish a parent center in a media center conference room to encourage a sense of ownership among the school's parents. Materials supplied by the CAPS (Children and Parents Succeeding) program of the school district were to be placed there for parents of young children, as well as a variety of materials for parents of high school students. Another purpose of the parent center was to provide a place for parents to use for socialization or school-related purposes. An advantage to placement in the media center is that parents may be encouraged to read and check out library materials also.

Teacher training

The writer planned to train teachers to post messages at the system workstation and from remote locations. Hesitant teachers were to be given assistance until they became confident in their ability to post messages independently. The writer also wanted to share with teachers ideas from the literature regarding teacher attitudes and openness in dealing with parents.

Increased school/home/community interaction

Little information of community interest circulated in the school and little notice was taken of occasional community service by the school. Therefore, the writer planned to involve school staff members in posting messages that would inform callers of community activities. Students and school staff were to be told of opportunities for community service and callers were to be given opportunities for participation in school-related activities. Recognition was to be given for service in the school and in the community through messages on the information line.

Report of action taken

A dedicated telephone line was acquired, and a computer-based telephone messaging system (Telecom's PhoneMaster) was purchased and installed in the office of the media center prior to implementation of the practicum. After receiving instructions from the vendor representative who installed the system, the writer recorded an opening message, new caller information, and the main directory. The opening message greets callers, new caller information explains how to access messages, and the main directory provides code numbers for subsidiary directories such as the Homework Directory.

At a faculty meeting, the principal told teachers of the writer's state teacher grant to establish a messaging system and expressed his

expectation that all teachers would post homework assignments and information about class activities. He asked teachers to contact the writer for training in use of the system. The writer then explained how the use of the system could help to accomplish a major objective of the school's strategic plan that addresses the need to increase communication between school and home. At this meeting the writer obtained faculty consensus on a method of assigning teacher code numbers for use in posting and retrieving messages. The teachers decided to use their three-digit room numbers to facilitate recall by themselves for posting homework assignments and by students for retrieving teachers' messages. These room numbers were attached to the preliminary number "2" as code numbers so that all homework could be accessed through the Homework Directory, which the writer had assigned the code number 2000.

At a subsequent faculty meeting, the writer shared information found in the literature relating to perceptions and attitudes in the teacher/parent relationship that may be caused by negative experiences. Teachers appeared to find the information helpful for use at the end of each nine-week reporting period, when parents go to teacher's rooms to receive progress reports.

The writer set up the following subsidiary directories: the Homework Directory with cells for the 46 teachers who would be posting messages; the Information Directory with cells for various departments, organizations, and clubs; the Lunch Menu Directory, with cells for the lunch menu and nutritional information; and the

Sports Directory with cells for the sports schedule and sports news. On accessing the Homework Directory, callers are given code numbers for individual teachers. In like manner, the other subsidiary directories provide code numbers for retrieval of information related to directory titles.

Although no other school in the district had a homework hotline, teachers had heard of its use in other districts and most of them were enthusiastic about learning how to post messages. The writer trained them as they came to the media center singly or by twos or threes to post initial messages on the system, and encouraged them to tell parents about class activities as well as homework assignments.

Students were informed in several morning announcements that they would soon have a homework hotline and information line, and were invited to enter a contest to name it. The Scot Line was chosen as the winning title. (The school football team is called the Scots, and the school logo depicts a brawny, kilted Scotsman.)

The writer used the Bookmaker Corporation's computer software program Clikbook to produce a four-page, double-sided directory/guide (see Appendix B) the size of a folded 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of paper for distribution to parents and school staff members, and a pocket-size directory/guide for students. A useful feature of the directory/guide is a mini-directory with space to fill in a student's scheduled classes, teachers' names and code numbers, and other most used code numbers. Also included in the directory/guide is the media

center telephone number and an invitation for parents to respond to information received on the Scot Line.

Four parents of ninth grade students, including a PTSO officer and a homemaker, agreed to be trained by the writer in the use of the Scot Line and to help other parents learn how to access messages. Three of the parents completed training and were able to help others. The homemaker could not be reached by telephone to set a date for training. Her step-son told the writer that the family had obtained an unlisted telephone number. A message sent home by that student brought no response. The three participating parents were encouraged to think about ways to improve communication between the school and parents, and to offer suggestions for improvement. One parent later began to record messages for the Parent Center cell on the Scot Line.

The principal set the Scot Line starting date, March 23, 1995, to coincide with the beginning of the last nine-week school reporting period. He informed parents of the new information source in a newsletter. The writer used the school's outcalling system (regularly used to report student absences) to tell parents about the Scot Line and to invite them to the March 27th PTSO meeting where they would receive a printed Scot Line directory/guide.

The writer asked the district communications director to contact the local newspaper's education reporter to help publicize the new messaging system. The reporter wrote an article about the Scot Line that appeared in the March 20, 1995 morning newspaper (see

Appendix C.) This article attracted interest at a larger neighboring city's NBC affiliate television station, and a news crew was sent to the school to televise a segment about the Scot Line. It was shown on an evening news program and again the next morning. The writer taped the segment and obtained the principal's permission to show it to all students over the school's television distribution system the next morning following the daily Channel One news program.

The writer discussed the expected benefits of the new messaging system with School Improvement Council members on March 27, 1995, and made a presentation at a PTSO meeting that evening; copies of the 1994-1995 Scot Line Directory/Guide were distributed at the PTSO meeting. Soon thereafter students received pocket-size copies of the directory/guide in their homerooms. Copies were made available in the media center for students to take home to interested parents.

The writer set up a parent center in a media center conference room to supply parents with information on helping their children to learn. Pamphlets, booklets, and charts distributed through the CAPS (Children and Parents Succeeding) Program of the school district were placed on shelves for parents to take home. Materials of this nature inform parents of ways to encourage students to complete homework assignments and to stay in school until graduation. Messages inviting parents to come to the center were placed on the Parent Center cell of the Scot Line.

The writer regularly wrote messages advertising the Scot Line to be read as morning and afternoon announcements. Journalism students routinely wrote articles about it for the school newspaper; the first such article is included in the appendices of this report (see Appendix D).

Although the writer posted almost all of the initial messages except homework assignments, recording by other individuals gradually increased. During the first nine weeks of implementation, messages were posted on the Scot Line by the principal, a guidance counselor, teachers, the PTSO president and another parent, two district program coordinators, eight students, and the writer.

Messages inviting student participation in community activities were regularly posted in School News. A typical message posted on the School News cell reminded students to bring canned goods to their homerooms; the Serteen Club, a student version of the Sertoma Club, was sponsoring a food drive for the needy at the time.

Community-related activities that have traditionally been a part of the school became generally known for the first time. For example, members of a student vocational club help to build booths and set up tables for an annual Hallowe'en carnival sponsored by a local literacy society; most local citizens, including the writer, were unaware of this school/community interaction until it was reported in a Student Clubs message on the Scot Line.

The district school-to-work program coordinator posted a message explaining the "shadowing" program that allows young

people to experience a typical work day in a chosen local work setting. Another district program coordinator posted the work schedule for Future 21 students, who receive training by actual experience in local work settings; the students in this program are in the certificate track.

Messages were posted on the Business Partners cell to report interaction between the school and its business partners. Students are encouraged to make better grades and attend school regularly as they learn about rewards that are provided by business partners for these behaviors.

The annual state needs assessment survey normally taken in April was administered by the state in mid-March 1995, before the messaging system became operational. Early administration of the needs assessment survey negated that survey's results as a method of measuring practicum outcomes. The writer therefore developed new teacher-made survey forms for parents (see Appendix E), students (see Appendix F), and teachers (see Appendix G) designed to obtain all information needed for measurement of practicum outcomes.

The writer decided to administer parent, student, and teacher surveys in May to assess the impact of messaging system usage for the last nine weeks of the 1994-1995 school year. Administration in May allowed evaluation by parents of 12th grade parents, who would not be available for participation in the second survey to be administered after the beginning of the 1995-1996 school year.

Securing parent participation in the survey proved to be a

problem. The writer and the media clerk distributed parent survey forms to parents of 72 students who received awards at an academic awards banquet. Only 6 forms were returned to the school. The principal offered school funds to pay for mailing survey forms to parents, but the writer did not anticipate any better return from mailing forms than from handing them out to parents at the banquet. The head of the English department agreed to assist the writer in selecting parents by stratified random sampling from practical, academic (middle) and college preparatory/honors level English classes. More than 100 forms were sent home by students. Although teachers promised to give extra homework points to students returning completed forms, only 25 more forms were received, making a total of 31 parent responses.

The student survey was administered May 24-25, 1995 to students in practical, academic, and college preparatory/honors level English classes selected by stratified random sampling. The 87 students present in the classes participated in the survey; however, some of the students did not respond to all of the statements. Students whose response to Statement 1 indicated that they had not called the Scot Line may have thought it unnecessary to respond to statements regarding messages they had accessed.

The teacher survey was administered at a general faculty meeting on May 25, 1995. All of the 29 teachers present at the meeting participated in the survey, but some did not respond to all of the statements. Some statements may have been perceived as

irrelevant. For example, an occupational teacher who did not assign homework might have found no applicable response to Statement 10 ("Homework completion in my classes has increased in this nine-week period.")

Statistical information was gathered from the messaging system activities log to document system use during the last nine-week student reporting period. The writer used these data and survey results to prepare an evaluation report for submission to the state teacher grant program office. The report was submitted on June 2, 1995.

Occupational teachers, students, and the writer prepared special messages for access during the summer. These messages described occupational courses and career opportunities, and were posted on the Scot Line chiefly for access by upcoming ninth grade students and their parents. Summer programs operated in the school, and some messages included telephone numbers of occupational teachers who could be contacted for further information about their courses. Two academic teachers left summer messages in the Homework Directory, and the writer encouraged summer use of the public library in a message on the Library cell. The PTSO president and the school-to-work coordinator also left summer messages on the Scot Line. School News messages posted during the summer included information about the ninth grade student/parent orientation day. Guidance Department messages included registration dates for the new school term.

The activities log generated by the messaging system was used to document system usage. All calls received and messages accessed were recorded in the log, as well as hours of heaviest usage from the end of the school year on June 2, 1995 until the next school year began on August 21, 1995.

During the summer, the district school board decided to remove the academic program from the writer's school at the end of the 1995-1996 school year. Thereafter students will enroll at the traditional high schools in their attendance zones, and the writer's school will become an extended campus, housing technological and occupational departments. The news was not unexpected - a committee had been studying alternate secondary school designs for months, seeking a model that would address the problem of low performance at the writer's school and that of equitable access to occupational and technological courses by all students in the district. Placement of low performing students with more highly motivated classmates is expected to increase both test scores and attendance. All students in Grades 10 through 12 will have access to occupational and technological courses, and it will be cost-effective to the district to load only one school facility with technology.

The school board's decision left parents and students of the writer's school with a sense of betrayal. Student enrollment at the beginning of the 1995-1996 school year was substantially lower than usual because some students decided to go ahead to the other schools;

ninth grade enrollment was extremely low. Some students transferred after the school year began.

On being appointed to the district Public Awareness Committee and charged with explaining why the secondary school redesign was necessary and how it would affect all high school students in the district, the writer offered the Scot Line as a verbal bulletin board to help inform the public. The writer created a subsidiary Secondary School Information Directory (see Appendix H), with cells containing messages that explained the secondary redesign, described how the extended campus would be used, answered frequently asked questions, and told callers how to get answers to other questions (see Appendix I). The latter message encouraged callers to dial the media center telephone number and to ask questions. A teacher from one of the traditional high schools worked with the writer and continued to post messages. Related activities were surveys taken by English teachers in their classes at the writer's school and one other high school to learn student concerns regarding the secondary redesign.

Beginning school activities related to the operation of the Scot Line took place as planned. After the writer had updated the Homework Directory teacher code numbers, the principal informed teachers via a handout that they could begin to post homework assignments. The writer trained new faculty members, helped returning teachers relearn the steps in posting messages, and shared

with teachers the comments made by parents and students on the surveys administered in May 1995.

The principal included information about the Scot Line in his first newsletter to parents. The writer prepared a new directory/guide. Included in the new edition was a mini-directory of occupational departments, instructors' names and code numbers. The PTSO vice-president and the writer distributed copies of the directory/guide to parents at an open house event, and encouraged them to use the Scot Line. Pocket-size copies were given to students in homerooms.

As the time drew near to administer the survey again, the writer realized that unbiased response to questions related to school/home communication could not be anticipated. Therefore new survey forms were prepared for use by students (see Appendix J) and teachers (see Appendix K). Requested information was limited to student and parent use of the Scot Line and parent, student, and teacher satisfaction with messaging systems as information sources. Student and teacher surveys were administered during the week of October 23, 1995.

The writer had posted an invitation to parents and community members to participate in an electronic evaluation of messaging systems as information sources. A subsidiary Evaluation Directory (see Appendix H) was created on the Scot Line in order to survey parents electronically; this was done to encourage more participation by parents than was experienced in May. Parents were asked to indicate satisfaction or dissatisfaction with messaging systems

(homework hotlines and information lines) as information sources (see Appendix L). Because other community members had begun to call the Scot Line, the writer also asked these callers to indicate satisfaction or dissatisfaction with messaging systems as information sources (see Appendix L). Electronic survey responses could be made at the caller's discretion.

The writer evaluated the use of the messaging system using assessment criteria related to outcomes: results of the parent survey administered in May 1995, results of the student survey administered in May 1995, results of the teacher survey administered in May 1995, results of the student survey administered in October 1995, results of the teacher survey administered in October 1995, results of the electronic parent survey administered in October and November 1995, results of the electronic community member survey administered in October and November 1995, and the cumulative system-generated activities log dated November 3, 1995.

CHAPTER V
RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

Poor communication existed between school and home. Increased communication was desired in order to enlist parental support for school success.

Solution strategies employed were 1) the use of a computer-based telephone messaging system, 2) parent training, 3) establishment of a parent center in the school, 4) teacher training, and 5) increased school/home/community interaction. Related planned activities associated with the messaging system were maintenance of a system-generated activities log, monitoring duties, log analysis, and preparation of an evaluation report for the state teacher grant program.

Anticipated outcomes related to the parent survey were expressed as percentages in the proposal because the writer expected more than 100 parents to return survey forms. Because only 31 parent survey forms were returned, expected outcomes have been expressed here as numerals. Many of the 31 parents whose survey forms were returned to the school did not respond to all of the

statements on the survey. Non-responses were counted in calculating achievement of the practicum objectives.

The outcomes as projected prior to practicum implementation are listed below, followed by results that were documented as described:

1. By the end of the implementation period there will be a perception by 3 of 4 responding parents that school information is comprehensive and easily accessible, as shown by results of a teacher-made survey (see Appendix E).

This outcome was not achieved. Although 22 of the 29 parents who responded to Item 3 ("Most needed information is on the Scot Line.") agreed that school information was comprehensive, their number did not represent 3 of 4 in the total of 31 parent respondents. Thirty parents responded to Item 2 ("I have found it easy to get information on the Scot Line."); although 22 of them agreed that school information was easily accessible, their number represented fewer than 3 of 4 in the total of 31 parent respondents.

2. By the end of the implementation period, 4 of 5 responding parents will believe they are informed of teacher expectations for their children, as shown by results of a teacher-made survey (see Appendix E).

This outcome was not achieved. Thirty parents responded to Item 4c ("Messages . . . tell enough about teacher expectations."); although 20 of them agreed with the statement, their number represented fewer than 3 of 4 in the total of 31 parent respondents.

3. By the end of the implementation period, there will be increased teacher involvement in making details of classroom activities and homework assignments available, as shown by 38 of the 51 teachers in the school engaging in regularly scheduled dissemination of information as documented in a record kept by the writer.

This outcome was achieved in that 43 of the 46 teachers (the number of eligible teachers estimated in the proposal to be 51 was actually 46; the ratio has been adjusted) who were expected to participate did so. Twenty-eight of the 31 academic teachers posted homework regularly; 3 of the 15 occupational teachers also posted homework, and messages related to course content and class activities were posted by 11 of the 12 remaining occupational teachers.

4. By the end of the implementation period, there will be a perception by 3 of 4 responding parents of the school as a partner in working for student success, as shown by results of a teacher-made survey (see Appendix E).

This outcome was not achieved. Sixteen of the 25 parents who responded to Item 9 ("Parents and teachers work together to help students succeed.") agreed with the statement, but their number represented fewer than 3 of 4 in the total of 31 parent respondents.

5. By the end of the implementation period, there will be increased parental interest in school programs and activities resulting from dissemination of school information as reported

by 4 of 5 responding parents on a teacher-made survey (see Appendix E).

This outcome was not achieved. Twenty-six of the 31 parents responded to Item 10 ("The Scot Line has helped me to take more interest in school events and activities."); 15 of them, less than half of the total of 31 parent respondents, agreed with the statement.

6. By the end of the implementation period, there will be a perception by 4 of 5 responding parents of increased school/community interaction resulting from dissemination of school information as shown by results of a teacher-made survey (see Appendix E).

This outcome was not achieved. Twenty-four of the 31 parents responded to Item 7 ("School and community members/organizations work together."); 12 of them, less than half of the total of 31 parents, agreed with the statement.

Of the 72 parent survey forms (see Appendix E) given to parents at an academic awards banquet in May 1995, only 6 forms were returned. Subsequently, more than 100 forms were sent home with students in English classes, but only 25 forms were returned. The low number of completed survey forms was disappointing to the writer, but typical of previous parental reluctance to participate in school activities.

An item-by-item examination of survey results (see Appendix M) reveals a more positive perception of the school by parents than is apparent from the above results. There were 278 responses indicating

agreement with survey statements, compared to only 33 responses indicating disagreement, a ratio of 8 to 1.

Ideally, there would have been 31 responses to each statement; instead, there were as few as 24. Some parents may have declined to respond to statements concerning information they had not accessed. Others may have thought that certain statements did not pertain to them. For whatever reasons, no statement received more than 30 responses. Additionally, there were 114 "don't know" responses, which led the writer to believe that some parents may not have read the directions before responding to the statements. They may have thought that, in circling a "3," they were assigning a rating of 3 on a scale of 1 to 5. For example, 6 parents circled that number in responding to Item 10, which referred to taking more interest in school activities as a result of accessing messages on the Scot Line. The writer thought it strange that 6 of 31 parents should not know whether their interest had increased; it seemed more likely that the respondents intended to register a moderate increase in interest.

The writer realized too late that the wording of some statements could be misinterpreted. For example, parents who had accessed only homework assignments might have thought that Item 1 ("I have called the Scot Line to get school information") referred only to school information other than homework assignments.

Nineteen of the 31 respondents reported that they had called the Scot Line; 9 indicated they had not called, 1 did not know, and 2 did not respond to the statement. Twenty-two agreed that most

needed information was on the Scot Line; 7 did not know, and 2 did not respond to the statement. Nineteen parents agreed that they had received ideas to help their children learn; 4 disagreed; 6 did not know, and 2 did not respond to the statement. Parents reported calling the Scot Line most for homework assignments. School News was the most accessed message, with the Principal's Corner next; Lunch Menus and Sports News were tied as the next most accessed messages. One parent reported calling the Scot Line every day, eight parents stated that they called two or three times a week, eight reported calling every week, four stated that they called every two weeks, and three reported calling two or three times monthly. About two thirds of the respondents stated that they usually called during late afternoon or early evening hours. Parent suggestions for other information to include on the Scot Line included three requests for specific student information such as attendance and grades. Results of the May parent survey are presented in Appendix M.

A teacher-made survey (see Appendix F) was administered to students selected by stratified random sampling in practical, academic, and college prep/honors level English classes (a total of 87 students in two 9th grade practical classes, one 9th and one 11th grade academic class, and two 11th grade college prep/honors classes) May 24-25, 1995. Some students did not respond to all of the statements. Thirty-one of the 87 students reported that they had called the Scot Line; 37 stated they had not called, 6 did not know,

and 13 did not respond. Thirty students agreed that information is easy to obtain on the Scot Line; 7 disagreed, 37 did not know, and 13 did not respond. Twenty-six students agreed that most needed information is on the Scot Line; 8 disagreed, 37 did not know, and 16 did not respond. Thirteen students agreed that they had received information about the school that they had not known before; 26 disagreed, 35 did not know, and 13 did not respond. Students reported calling the Scot Line most often to get homework assignments. Next most accessed messages by students were School News, Sports Schedule, and Sports News, in that order. Thirty-four of the 72 students who responded to Item 8 ("...I have done more homework this nine-week period") agreed with the statement, 26 disagreed, 12 did not know, and 15 did not respond. Thirty-eight of the 74 students who responded to Item 10 ("...my attendance has been better this nine-week period") agreed with the statement, 23 disagreed, 13 did not know, and 13 did not respond.

Among suggestions for improvement was a request that teachers post their own homework assignments. Results of the May student survey are shown in Appendix N.

A teacher-made survey (see Appendix G) was administered on May 25, 1995 to 29 teachers, whose responses indicated general satisfaction with the messaging system. Some teachers did not respond to all of the statements. Twenty-two teachers indicated they had called the Scot Line for school information, 5 had not, 1 did not know, and 1 did not respond. Twenty-four teachers agreed that most

needed information is on the Scot Line, 1 disagreed, and 4 did not know. Twenty teachers thought they had given parents their expectations for students, 1 disagreed, 7 did not know, and 1 did not respond. Fifteen teachers agreed that parents and teachers work together to help students succeed; 8 disagreed, 4 did not know, and 2 did not respond. Nine teachers reported that homework completion had increased in their classes during the nine-week period, 9 reported that it had not increased, 8 did not know, and 3 did not respond. Six teachers reported that student attendance had increased in their classes during the nine-week period, 16 reported that it had not, 6 did not know, and 1 did not respond.

Messages most accessed by teachers were School News, Principal's Corner, and Sports News, in that order. Teacher suggestions for improvement included changing messages more often and more frequent mention of the Scot Line in announcements to remind students of its existence. Results of the May 25, 1995 teacher survey are tabulated in Appendix 0).

When results of the state needs assessment survey (administered in March shortly before the implementation of the Scot Line) were received, the writer compared two parent responses on this survey to those received on the teacher-made survey administered in late May after the Scot Line had been in operation nine weeks. As shown in Table 1, positive perception of the school by parents increased appreciably during this time period.

The state needs assessment survey report sent to the school did not include the number of parent participants - just the number of responses to each statement. Therefore the writer made the comparison using the number of responses to each statement on the teacher-made survey forms. Responses indicating agreement are shown in the "Yes" column and responses indicating disagreement are shown in the "No" column.

Table 1

Comparison of Parent Responses on a State Needs Assessment Survey Administered in March, 1995 and a Teacher-made Survey Administered in May, 1995

Statement		Responses			
		n	Yes[a]	No[b]	Don't Know
Teachers tell me their expectations for my child	March	56	32	19	5
	May	30	20	8	2
Parents and teachers work together to help students succeed	March	53	26	23	4
	May	25	16	4	5

[a]n = responses indicating "strongly agree" and "agree."

[b]n = responses indicating "disagree" and "strongly disagree."

System utilization was measured by analysis of the system activities log at the end of the 1994-1995 school year. During the

nine-week period from March 23, 1995 to June 2, 1995, the number of telephone calls to the Scot Line was 1993; 7812 messages were accessed during this time period. The highest number of accesses for a specific teacher's messages was 393. Greatest use of the system was made from nine to ten o'clock in the evening, second greatest from seven to eight o'clock, and third from six to seven o'clock.

Fulfilling requirements of the state teacher grant program, the writer completed an evaluation of the messaging system and reported parent, student, and teacher satisfaction experienced by (a) access to school information, (b) access to homework assignments, (c) increased parental involvement (as documented by responses on a parent survey), and (d) increased opportunites to share teacher expectations and details of classroom activities.

From June 2 through August 20, 1995, when there was no regular school session, 338 telephone calls were made to the Scot Line and 1814 messages were accessed. Total calls increased from 1993 to 2331 and total accessed messages increased from 7751 to 9565 during that time period. An average of five messages were accessed per telephone call. The writer had anticipated retrieval of occupational teachers' messages by upcoming ninth graders and their parents, and noted with pleasure the number of other teachers' messages accessed during this time period.

When it became evident that the school climate was not conducive to repetition of the previous year's survey procedure, the writer decided to concentrate on the use of the Scot Line in surveys

administered to students and teachers. Additionally, the writer planned to gather data related to satisfaction with messaging systems as information sources from parents and community members.

The second student survey (see Appendix J) was administered to 124 students in October 1995. Participants were students in 10th, 11th, and 12 grade practical, academic, and college preparatory/honors English classes selected by stratified random sampling. Survey results indicated that 90% of the respondents considered the Scot Line to be a good way to get school information, 34% had called the Scot Line for school information, 84% considered the Scot Line to be a good way to get homework assignments, 40% had called for assignments, and 65% indicated that they would call for assignments. A comparison of student responses by English level is shown in Table 2.

More homework assignments were retrieved by students in the academic track. Other messages reported as most accessed were Sports Schedule, Student Club News, and School News, in that order. Proportionally, more students in academic English classes had accessed Sports Schedule and Student Club News; more students in college preparatory/honors English classes had accessed School News; and more students in practical English classes had accessed Principal's Corner and Guidance Department messages.

Student comments related to the effectiveness of the Scot Line were favorable. Several college preparatory/honors level students

commented that they did not call for homework assignments because they did not need to do so; two added that they copy the assignments.

Table 2

Comparison of Practical, Academic, and College Preparatory/Honors Level English Students' Responses to Scot Line Survey Statements

Statement	Reply	English Level		
	Yes/No	Pr. n=30	Acad. n=47	CP/H n =47
I think the Scot Line is a good way to get school information.	Yes	26	41	44
	No	4	5	1
	No response	0	1	2
I have called the Scot Line to get school information.	Yes	8	14	20
	No	22	32	27
	No response	0	1	0
I think the Scot Line is a good way to get homework assignments.	Yes	23	42	39
	No	7	5	5
	No response	0	0	3
I have called the Scot Line to get homework assignments.	Yes	8	23	18
	No	14	21	29
	No response	8	3	0
I will call the Scot Line to get homework assignments.	Yes	16	33	32
	No	14	14	13
	No response	0	0	2

Several students expressed the opinion that the Scot Line is "a good thing." One student added "Thank you" to a favorable comment. Another commented that the Scot Line is not well advertised, and added, "You should work on it." A jokester wrote, "Turn it off immediately. Please." Suggestions included requests that teachers keep homework assignments current and that they "speak up." Several comments referred pessimistically to the fact that the school's academic program will be removed at the end of the current school year; two examples are, "Why have a Scot Line? It's over," and "What do we need a Scot Line for? Next year we won't be Scots."

The second teacher survey (see Appendix K) was administered to twenty-two academic and 15 occupational teachers attending a general faculty meeting on October 24, 1995. Twenty-two of the school's 31 academic teachers were present, along with all 15 of the occupational teachers.

Twenty-nine teachers, including 9 occupational teachers, reported that they posted homework on the homework hotline. In the writer's opinion, only 6 occupational teachers actually posted homework, although others posted information about their classwork and activities. Suggestions for improvement were more recognition for student achievement and more descriptions of planned activities.

A comparison of the responses of academic and occupational teachers is given in Table 3.

Table 3

Comparison of Academic and Occupational Teachers' Responses to Scot Line Survey Statements

Statement	Reply	Teachers Acad. n=22	Teachers Occup. n=15
I post homework on the homework hotline.	Yes	20	9
	No	2	6
Good method for parents and students to get homework assignments.	Yes	22	14
	No	0	1
I have called the Scot Line.	Yes	15	13
	No	7	2
I have suggested information for the Scot Line.	Yes	3	6
	No	19	9
Good way to make school information available to parents.	Yes	22	15
	No	0	0

Parents and community members had been asked in an Evaluation Directory message on the Scot Line to participate in an electronic survey relating to caller satisfaction with messaging systems as information sources (see Appendix L). Parents who responded were invited to evaluate both the homework hotline and

the information line; community members who responded were invited to evaluate the information line. Results of the parent and community member surveys are presented in Table 4, along with data relating to homework hotlines and information lines from student and teacher responses on traditional student and teacher surveys.

Table 4

Responses of Parents, Students, Teachers, and Community Members Regarding Satisfaction With Electronic Messaging Systems

Group		Messaging System			
		Homework hotline		Information line	
	n	Approve	Disapprove	Approve	Disapprove
Parents	37	36	1		
	44			43	1
Community	58			57	1
Members					
Students	124	104	17	111	10
Teachers	37	36	1	37	0

In order to inform callers about the secondary redesign to be initiated in the 1996-1997 school year, the writer created a Secondary School Information Directory (see Appendix H) on the Scot Line in late September 1995. The system-generated analysis log for November 3, 1995 revealed that the directory had received 39 calls. A message describing the redesign of the high school system (see

Appendix I) had been accessed 31 times; a message about changes to be anticipated at the writer's school (see Appendix I) had been accessed 32 times; a message answering frequently asked questions (see Appendix I) had been accessed 28 times, and a message telling callers how to get answers to their questions (see Appendix I) had been accessed 24 times.

System utilization during the entire practicum period from March 23, 1995 to November 3, 1995 was measured by analysis of the cumulative system activities log dated November 3, 1995. The total number of telephone calls to the Scot Line was 2689. A total of 11093 messages were accessed during this time period. The average number of messages accessed per telephone call was four. The highest number of accesses for a specific teacher's messages was 424. Information line messages accessed most were Principal's Corner, School News, and Guidance Department. Peak hours of system use were the evening hours from nine to ten o'clock, seven to eight o'clock, and six to seven o'clock, listed in declining order of use.

Discussion

The practicum experience has presented interesting and challenging opportunities for the writer to work informally with parents, teachers, and students. School problems of declining test scores and low performing students remain, but communication has increased between school and home.

Had conditions remained normal at the writer's school, a second parent survey identical to the first would have been administered near the end of the practicum period and the results of the two surveys would have been analyzed to determine achievement of the objectives. May Scot Line survey results indicated that more parents had a positive perception of the school than before the initiation of the messaging system. However, after parents learned that their children would have to attend another school next year, their attitudes toward the school and the school district changed. The writer knew that parental perception of the school as a partner had been dealt a lethal blow.

Ramirez-Smith (1995) found that a trusting relationship could be built through better communication with parents, and that when parents have positive experiences in their children's schools they can overcome negative feelings associated with their own school experiences as children. Although May survey results indicated that parents became more aware of school activities and functions, attendance at school events by parents did not increase. Parents who do attend school events often express gratitude for the convenience offered by the Scot Line. A frequently heard comment is that they themselves would have been better students had their parents been able to access homework assignments and other school information. This comment underscores two major benefits of the Scot Line - parents do not have to come into the school to freceive school

information and receipt of school information does not depend upon students, who often prove unreliable as messengers.

of the major benefits from the use of the Scot Line has been that parents do not have to come into the school to receive school information. Another is that receipt of school information does not depend upon students, who often prove unreliable as messengers.

One of three principles to be considered by schools in working with at-risk families listed by Liontos (1992) is to give them some control in the education of their children to counter their feeling of being powerless. Right now in the writer's school it would be difficult to convince parents that their opinions are important and would be considered in setting school policy. Parent uncertainty over the change in the secondary school design to take place next year prevents them from responding in a positive way to suggestions from the school. One thing the school can do is to continue providing information on the Scot Line. Arrowsmith (1990) suggested that a school telephone number should be given to parents so that they may call to respond to school information. The writer included the school media center telephone number for this purpose in the directory/guide distributed to parents (see Appendix B).

Parents did not use the parent center prepared for them. On "open house" night several parents expressed interest in the center but did not return to make use of it. However, information from a parenting newsletter was posted regularly on the Parent Center cell of the Scot Lined by a parent who had participated in parent training.

Teacher training was easily accomplished and relatively uneventful. The writer posted homework assignments for one teacher who was apprehensive about recording messages. Students posted homework assignments for several teachers initially, but callers indicated that they wanted teachers to take the time to do it themselves. Teachers must be convinced of the messaging system's efficacy as a method of communication to be willing to cooperate fully in its day-to-day operation, keeping homework assignments up to date and offering material for posting on the information line.

School/home/community interaction included a pizza party given by a school business partner for students who had maintained a 3.0 grade point average during the last nine-week student reporting period of the 1994-1995 school year, and an orientation day/cookout for freshmen and their parents prior to the beginning of the 1995-1996 school year. This type of activity was advertised on the Scot Line.

David (1991) stated that technology can be effectively used to facilitate change in education. When this school becomes an extended campus, innovative programs involving community interaction with industry and higher education will be available to students. Right now it is important that parents in the writer's school and throughout the district understand the reasons for the secondary school redesign to be instituted next year. Only if the necessity for change is understood and supported by area residents can it be successful. An attitudinal change is needed among parents at the other two schools who are unwilling for their children to come to the

writer's school. They must be able to look beyond the present facility and view it as the technological magnet school that it can become. The writer hopes that the Scot Line will be an agent of change in the transition process by providing messages that inform the public about the secondary school redesign. However, during the five-week period that the information was available prior to November 3, 1995, only 39 callers were interested enough to access the Secondary School Information Directory to receive messages.

Computer-based messaging systems are vulnerable to power failure, as are all devices that operate on electricity. The Scot Line was out of service overnight twice for this reason, each time due to loss of power at the school during the early evening hours. It was also out of service overnight once because someone posted a message and failed to put the system back "on the hook" to monitor for incoming calls. (The system is inaccessible to callers while messages are being posted, and must then be reset to receive incoming calls.)

Another problem that took the Scot Line out of service became apparent one morning in late September when the writer noticed no activity on the system monitor. On lifting the handset to listen for a dial tone, the writer was treated instead to gospel music and an assortment of announcements. Radio interference on the dedicated telephone line in the media center caused the Scot Line to be inoperative until a serviceman could repair the line, nine days later.

Planning, implementing, and monitoring the use of a messaging system has been a growth experience for the writer. Several incidents

associated with posting and updating messages may provide cautionary information for prospective implementers of similar systems. A teacher, in posting homework for the first time this year, highlighted "new message" on the system monitor and keyed in her code number. The system responded with a beep, which is the signal that an incorrect command has been given. The teacher keyed in her initials instead and was able to record the message. As she related the occurrence to the writer, it was apparent that she was pleased with her resourcefulness in finding a way to post her message. The writer had to reluctantly point out that although the homework assignment had indeed been posted, it could hardly be accessed by students keying in the teacher's code number. Luckily, the system provides a method of transferring messages among cells, and the writer simply moved the message so that the teacher would not have to record it again. The teacher, in posting her message, should have highlighted "re-record message," the command used for recording over a previous message. Later another teacher had a similar experience; her solution was to drop the initial "2" from her code number and record her message using only her room number. Instructions for posting messages are quite easy to follow, but it is essential that one do so.

Human error may also cause loss of information on a messaging system. The writer had been concerned since initial posting of messages that someone would enter an incorrect code number and inadvertently record over an existing message. The week before school ended last year someone did - the writer.

Recommendations

The writer makes the following recommendations:

1. Messaging systems should be made mandatory in all public schools. The availability of school information at any hour can do much to enhance communication between school and home.

2. Teachers, in developing surveys, should label the response columns instead of using a number scale and carefully word statements to make their meaning very clear. This should reduce the possibility of inaccuracies in responses.

3. One person should monitor the messaging system and receive all materials suggested for inclusion in messages. For obvious reasons, material to be posted should first be approved. Exceptions are the messages posted by colleagues who have cells on the system.

Dissemination

A newspaper article and a TV news program have advertised the practicum to date. The evident success of the Scot Line led to the purchase of a messaging system by the principal of another high school. The writer will include an account of this practicum experience in a journal article about messaging systems to be submitted this year. The writer will also share her experiences in presentations at state and regional media specialist and technology conferences, where emphasis will be placed on the creation of an information line that is unique to the individual school.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
MESSAGING SYSTEM SURVEY FORM

_____ Survey
(Name of telephone information system)

Date_____

Please fill out this survey form on the school's telephone information system.

Please check: parent ____ community member but not a parent or guardian ____

other ____

Yes	No		
____	____	1.	My son or daughter attends McDuffie High School.
____	____	2.	I have attended at least one PTSO meeting and/or parent/teacher conference day or evening.
____	____	3.	I have found it easy to get information from the school.
____	____	4.	I have called (telephone number) for school information.
____	____	5.	I have called for homework assignments.
____	____	6.	I think students engage in community activities and community members work to help the school.
			I think that announcements on the (name of system) line tell enough about: (please check yes or no for each)
____	____	7.	school activities
____	____	8.	teacher expectations for my child
____	____	9.	homework assignments
____	____	10.	lunch menu
____	____	11.	I have received ideas for helping my child learn.

Thank you for completing this survey form. If you have ideas that would help us to serve you better, please answer the following question:
What other information would you like to receive on the (name of system)?

_____

_____

_____

Have you had any difficulty getting information from the (name of system)?
Please explain:

_____

_____

_____

If you need assistance in getting information from the (name of system), please call (media center telephone number).

APPENDIX B

1994-1995 SCOT LINE DIRECTORY/GUIDE

The McDuffie High School

Scot Line

"A Link between Home and School"

Telephone Number: **375-2020**

1994-1995
Directory/Guide

About the Scot Line:

The Scot Line is a communication[75] system that allows recorded messages to be received by callers twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. In order to access messages, you must use a touch-tone telephone. If the line is busy when you call, please try again.

Calling the Scot Line:

Upon reaching the Scot Line, you will first hear a greeting. This message offers information for new callers and numbers to select for further information. **If you know the number you want, press that number to stop the greeting message and receive the desired message.**

Example: To receive a homework assignment, press the teacher's code number when the greeting message begins. The greeting message will stop, and the teacher's message will begin. 76

When a message ends, you will be asked to enter a selection. You may then press a code number to hear another message or hang up.

Note: In case of school closings or other unusual circumstances, the Scot Line will be converted to a single message system. Necessary information will be heard instead of the greeting message.

The directory on the following pages lists all numbers currently on the Scot Line. Please call often to stay informed about school news and activities.

To quickly access desired information:

1. Dial 375-2020 to reach the Scot Line.
2. Press the code number for the specific message you want to hear.

Scot Line Directory

1000 New caller information
1010 Advanced caller information
1020 Main directory

2000 Homework directory

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Adams	2110	Littlejohn	2116
Allen	2114	Macdonald	2107
Bailey	2301	McKie	2201
Blackston	2505	Massey	2206
Boozer	2401	Mathews	2204
Bradford	2405	Mayfield	2106
Brown	2601	Nations	2309
Burd	2111	Parnell	2506
Cathey	2112	Parr	2409
Chidester	2103	Pearson	2202
Clark	2102	Pew	2113
Dalton	2307	Pruitt	2108
Darby	2109	Rankin	2502
Davis, C.	2402	Sanstrum	2308
Davis, O.	2115	Sartain	2302
Dobbins	2602	Smith	2305
Epstein	2207	Standridge	2508
Foster	2504	Tribble	2311
Gennaro	2118	Ulrich	2509
Greer	2310	Voiselle	2101
Hardy	2105	Wamsley	2303
Hawkins	2104	Webb	2407
Kinert	2304	Williams, D.	2306

3000 Information directory
- 3005 School News
- 3010 Principal's Corner
- 3020 Guidance Department
- 3025 PTSO
- 3030 Parent Center
- 3035 School Improvement Council
- 3040 Library
- 3045 Student Club News
- 3050 School Business Partners
- 3060 School-to-Work Program
- 3070 Future 21 Program

4000 Sports Events Directory
- 4010 Sports Schedule
- 4020 Sports News

5000 Lunch Menu Directory
- 5010 Weekly Lunch Menu
- 5020 Lunch Menu Information

McDuffie High School is pleased to offer this "link between home and school" to provide school information to parents and to remind students of homework and school activities. To respond to information on the Scot Line, please call 260-5701. We invite your suggestions on ways to improve it. We are all learning together!

Mini-directory:

Code Number	Information
3005	School News

Schedule and Code Numbers for Homework

Period	Subject	Teacher	Code Number
1st			
2nd			
3rd			
4th			
5th			
6th			
7th			

The Scot Line

"A link between home and School"

McDuffie High School
Anderson, SC

The Scot Line is partially funded by the
SC Dept. of Education Teacher Grant Program

APPENDIX C

ANDERSON INDEPENDENT-MAIL ARTICLE

By L.A. Newkirk
Independent Mail

Roads that aren't clearly connected at intersections or that need widening will be the focus of a two month study by the Anderson ; Area Transportation Study Policy Committee.

The committee met Monday and decided to take a closer look at long-range projects before assigning them to a five-year completion list.

"We thought it was probably best to put together a priority list," said Rep. John Tucker, D-Anderson, who is chairman of the committee. "In the meantime, the highway department [illegible] us," he said, referring t jects' price tags.

New road projects inc ening S.C. Highway 24, Highway 28 Bypass to Lake and S.C. Highway Shockley Ferry Road t Road. The committee consider creating a n connecting North Clem evard to S.C. Highway 8 saver for those driver northern-most section o

Intersections inclu Highway 28 and Airli S.C. Highway 24 and Road, South Boulevard houn Street, Concord I

November 21, 1995

Permission is granted to Mitzi K. Burden to submit a copy of the article entitled, "McDuffie High School Starts Information Hot Line," from the March 21, 1995 issue of the Anderson Independent-Mail, in a report to Nova Southeastern University.

Signed

John Gouch, Managing Editor
The Anderson Independent -Mail
Anderson, SC

McDuffie High School starts information hot line

By Jenna Russell
Independent Mail

Give some students a message and tell them to carry it to their parents, and the delivery may be quicker than Federal Express.

Hand it to other youngsters, however, and the message may be lost in transit forever.

At McDuffie High School in Anderson, this week marks the end of parent dependence on student messengers. Homework assignments and course expectations, sports news, menus and school closings will be available starting Thursday. Parents need only dial 375-2020.

"At our level, you really don't have the rapport with parents that you have in elementary school," said librarian Mitzi Burden, the hot line's originator. "Things sent home often never get there."

In addition to academic listings, the school principal and guidance counselors will have their own corners on the verbal bulletin board. After an introduction to the system, a menu lists code numbers for various topics.

The South Carolina Department of Education gave $2,000 to the phone project in response to a grant request written by Ms. Burden. Additional costs of $700 to $800 were covered by the school, after Principal Jacky Stamps gave the hot line his stamp of approval.

For several years, annual surveys have indicated many parents don't feel fully in touch with the school.

"It's another way to have contact between teachers and parents," Mr. Stamps said. "Many parents have no time to call the school during work hours to get information."

The "Scot Line," as it was named in a student contest, can be accessed at any hour. While Ms. Burden is at present the voice of the system, she hopes students and parents will record messages in the future.

The first phone-in bulletin board in School District 5, the Scot Line will include tips for parents, school-to-work and school business partner news.

Anderson Independent-Mail 3-21-95

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX D
STUDENT NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

The Scotsman

Vol. 30 No. 3 | McDuffie High School, Anderson, S.C. | March, 1995

Senior Profile
Stephanie Spearman

By Amanda Burdette

Stephanie Spearman is just one of the many outstandingseniors this year. Stephanie is a second year McDuffie student who transferred to McDuffie from Westside. She is a cheerleader for McDuffie and has been since she transferred

November 21, 1995

Permission is granted to Mitzi K. Burden to submit a copy of the article entitled, "Missed Out? Call the Scot Line!," from the March, 1995 issue of "The Scotsman," the student newspaper of McDuffie High School, in a report to Nova Southeastern University.

Signed

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Jacky R. Stamps, Principal
McDuffie High School
Anderson, SC

Nu Arrivals at MHS

On February 8, McDuffie welcomed five very talented guys to celebrate Black History Month. The Nu Arrivals got everybody in the mood with African-American songs from the past and present.

They called their ceremony "African-American Music in the Soul of America." The group re-

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ced.
that they'd
and every-
assembly.
you to tell
t about their
write them,

Missed Out?
Call the Scot Line!

""Mom, I just can't make it to school today. I feel so bad! I wonder if my essay is due today in Mr. Bailey's class . I'm not sure what the score was in the basketball game last night. I wonder if lunch will be different today."

"Well, honey, call the Scot Line."

The Scot Line went into action on March 23 for MHS students, faculty, parents and interested citizens.

Mrs. Burden, MHS librarian, wrote a teacher's grant last spring to get the money for this hot line (a computer-based telephone recording system).

The hot line was created so students and parents can get information about PTSO meetings, sports, school news and activities, class work and HOMEWORK!

Students suggested names for the hot line. Cordell Berry's recommendation that the hot line be called the Scot Line won him $25.00.

To use the Scot Line you simply call in from any touch-tone phone. The first time you will be informed on how to access the information you want by touching certain numbers. After the first call you will not have to listen to the whole thing, but can simply punch in the number you wish to reach.

Teachers will be assigned numbers so that they can leave a message for students and their parents about homework or class work students may have missed if they were absent. Alas, no more excuses!

The Scot Line will be available 24 hours a day. If you have a touch-tone phone, you have access to the Scot Line by dialing 375-2020.

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX E

PARENT SCOT LINE SURVEY FORM

Scot Line Parent Survey Form

Date_____ 87

Please use the following scale to circle your responses:
5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=don't know, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree

1. I have called the Scot Line to get school information. 5 4 3 2 1
2. I have found it easy to get information on the Scot Line. 5 4 3 2 1
3. Most needed school information is on the Scot Line. 5 4 3 2 1
4. Messages on the Scot Line tell enough about the following subjects:
   a. school news 5 4 3 2 1
   b. school activities and events 5 4 3 2 1
   c. teacher expectations for my child 5 4 3 2 1
   d. homework assignments 5 4 3 2 1
   e. sports schedules and events 5 4 3 2 1
   f. lunch menus 5 4 3 2 1
5. I have received ideas for helping my child learn. 5 4 3 2 1
6. McDuffie students are engaging in community activities. 5 4 3 2 1
7. School and community members/organizations work together. 5 4 3 2 1
8. Business partners (BASF and Sam's) are helping the school. 5 4 3 2 1
9. Parents and teachers work together to help students succeed. 5 4 3 2 1.
10. The Scot Line has helped me take more interest in school events and activities. 5 4 3 2 1

Please check if you have accessed messages from the following:

___School News	___Principal's Corner	___Guidance Dept.
___PTSO	___Business Partner News	___Student Club News
___Library	___Future 21 Program	___School-to-Work Program
___Parent Center	___Sports News	___Sports Schedule
___Lunch Menus	___Lunch Menu Information	___School Improvement Council
	___Homework Assignments	

Please help us improve the Scot Line to serve you better, by answering the following questions (Use the back of this form if necessary):

What other information would you like to receive on the Scot Line?

_____

_____

_____

Do you have other suggestions for ways to improve the Scot Line? Please list them.

_____

_____

_____

How often do you call the Scot Line?_____

What time do you usually call the Scot Line?_____

What information do you call for most?_____

Thank you for completing this survey form.

APPENDIX F

STUDENT SCOT LINE SURVEY FORM

Scot Line Student Survey Form

Date_____

Please use the following scale to circle your responses:
5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=don't know, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree

1. I have called the Scot Line to get school information. 5 4 3 2 1
2. I have found it easy to get information on the Scot Line. 5 4 3 2 1
3. Most needed school information is on the Scot Line. 5 4 3 2 1
4. Messages on the Scot Line tell enough about the following subjects:
   a. school news 5 4 3 2 1
   b. school activities and events 5 4 3 2 1
   c. teacher expections for students 5 4 3 2 1
   d. homework assignments 5 4 3 2 1
   e. sports schedules and events 5 4 3 2 1
   f. lunch menus 5 4 3 2 1
5. I have learned information I did not know about my school. 5 4 3 2 1
6. I have used the Scot Line most for homework assignments. 5 4 3 2 1
7. I always do homework assigned by my teachers. 5 4 3 2 1
8. I have not always done my homework, but I have done more homework this nine-week period. 5 4 3 2 1
9. I had perfect attendance for nine weeks and attended a pizza party. 5 4 3 2 1
10. I have not had perfect attendance, but my attendance has been better this nine-week period. 5 4 3 2 1

Please check if you have accessed messages from the following:

___School News	___Principal's Corner	___Guidance Dept.
___PTSO	___Business Partner News	___Student Club News
___Library	___Future 21 Program	___School-to-Work Program
___Parent Center	___Sports News	___Sports Schedule
___Lunch Menus	___Lunch Menu Information	___School Improvement Council
	___Homework Assignments	

Please help to improve the Scot Line by answering the following questions (Use the back of this form if necessary):

What other information should be included on the Scot Line?

_____

_____

_____

Do you have other suggestions for ways to improve the Scot Line? Please list them.

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for completing this survey form.

APPENDIX G

TEACHER SCOT LINE SURVEY FORM

Scot Line Teacher Survey Form

Date_____ 91

Please use the following scale to circle your responses:
5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=don't know, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree

1. I have called the Scot Line to get school information. 5 4 3 2 1
2. I have found it easy to get information on the Scot Line. 5 4 3 2 1
3. Most needed school information is on the Scot Line. 5 4 3 2 1
4. Messages on the Scot Line tell enough about the following subjects:
   a. school news 5 4 3 2 1
   b. school activities and events 5 4 3 2 1
   c. teacher expectations for students 5 4 3 2 1
   d. homework assignments 5 4 3 2 1
   e. sports schedules and events 5 4 3 2 1
   f. lunch menus 5 4 3 2 1
5. I have given parents my expectations for students 5 4 3 2 1
6. McDuffie students are engaging in community activities. 5 4 3 2 1
7. School and community members/organizations work together. 5 4 3 2 1
8. Business partners (BASF and Sam's) are helping the school. 5 4 3 2 1
9. Parents and teachers work together to help students succeed. 5 4 3 2 1
10. Homework completion in my classes has increased in this nine-week period. 5 4 3 2 1
11. Attendance in my classes has improved in this nine-week period. 5 4 3 2 1

Please check if you have accessed messages from the following:

___School News	___Principal's Corner	___Guidance Dept.
___PTSO	___Business Partner News	___Student Club News
___Library	___Future 21 Program	___School-to-Work Program
___Parent Center	___Sports News	___Sports Schedule
___Lunch Menus	___Lunch Menu Information	___School Improvement Council
	___Homework Assignments	

Please help to improve the Scot Line by answering the following questions (Use the back of this form if necessary):

What other information should be included on the Scot Line?

_____

_____

_____

Do you have other suggestions for ways to improve the Scot Line? Please list them.

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for completing this survey form.

APPENDIX H

SECONDARY SCHOOL INFORMATION DIRECTORY EVALUATION DIRECTORY

5000 Secondary School Information Directory

5010 Redesign of High School System
5020 Changes at McDuffie
5030 Answers to Frequently Asked Questions
5040 How to Get Answers to Your Questions

6000 Evaluation Directory

7000 Parent - Hotline Evaluation
8000 Parent - Information Line Evaluation
9000 Community Member - Information Line Evaluation

(from 1995-1996 Scot line Directory/Guide)

APPENDIX I
SECONDARY SCHOOL INFORMATION SCRIPT

5000 Secondary School Information Directory

Message: *This is the secondary school information directory. To learn how the Anderson secondary school system is being changed, press 5010. To learn why McDuffie High School is being changed, press 5020. For answers to other frequently asked questions, press 5030. If you have a question you would like to have answered, press 5040. And to help evaluate the use of a hotline, press 6000. Repeating these code numbers: for Anderson school district changes, press 5010; to learn why McDuffie is being changed, press 5020; for answers to other questions, press 5030; to ask a question, press 5040, or to help evaluate the use of a hotline, press 6000.*

5010 Changes in Anderson High Schools

Message: *This message answers the question, "How is the Anderson secondary school system going to change?" Beginning next year, high school students in Anderson School District Five will attend school in their attendance zones. Students who take occupational courses will take those courses on the present McDuffie campus and the rest of their classes at their home schools, Hanna or Westside.*

5020 McDuffie High School Change

Message: *This message answers the question, "Why is McDuffie High School being changed?" McDuffie is being changed for two reasons. First, all high school students should have access to the occupational courses offered at the school. Beginning next year,*

no occupational courses will be offered at Hanna and Westside. Students will take these courses at the extended campus, the present McDuffie High School. Second, for a number of years low performing students have chosen to attend McDuffie. Their low standardized test scores indicate a need for better preparation for post-secondary life. These students will be placed with higher performing students at the other high schools. It is expected that their school performance and their test scores will improve.

5030 Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

Message: *Here are some questions and answers about the changes to be made in the high schools:*

1. Can the decision to change McDuffie be reversed? Can we get our school back? No. The decision to change McDuffie was made by the board of trustees because it will benefit all students in the district, and that decision cannot be reversed.

2. Where will McDuffie students go to school? Beginning next year, all District 5 high school students will attend school in their attendance zones, either Hanna or Westside.

3. Will the athletes from McDuffie have to wait a year to play on teams at Hanna or Westside? No. The athletes who are academically eligible to play will not have to wait a year to play at Hanna or Westside.

4. Can the students at McDuffie this year come back next year to take occupational courses? Yes, if they are in occupational programs now they will attend either Hanna or Westside, but will take their occupational training at the extended campus, which is the present McDuffie High School.

5040 How to Get Answers to Other Questions

Message: *If you have a question about the school changes, please call* 260-5701 *any weekday between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. You are encouraged to call in questions and your questions will be answered. Please call if you have a question, and thank you for calling the Scot Line. The number, again, is* 260-5701.

APPENDIX J
REVISED STUDENT SCOT LINE SURVEY FORM

Scot Line Student Survey Form

Date_____

Please circle Y for yes or N for no in response to the following statements.

1. I have called the Scot Line to get school information. Y N
2. I think the Scot Line is a good way to get school information. Y N
3. I will use the Scot Line to get homework assignments. Y N
4. I think the Scot Line is a good way to get homework assignments. Y N

I have listened to messages about the following:

5. School News	Y	N	11. Business Partner News	Y	N
6. PTSO	Y	N	12. Future 21 Program	Y	N
7. Library	Y	N	13. Homework Assignments	Y	N
8. Parent Center	Y	N	14. Guidance Dept.	Y	N
9. Lunch Menus	Y	N	15. Student Club News	Y	N
10. Principal's Corner	Y	N	16. Sports Schedule	Y	N

Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX K

REVISED TEACHER SCOT LINE SURVEY FORM

Scot Line Teacher Survey Form

Date_____

Please circle Y for yes or N for no in response to the following statements:

1. I am a vocational teacher.	Y	N
2. I am an academic teacher.	Y	N
3. I post homework on the homework hotline.	Y	N
4. I think a hotline is a good method for students and parents to get homework assignments.	Y	N
5. I have called the Scot Line.	Y	N
6. I have suggested information for the Scot Line.	Y	N
7. I think using a system like the Scot Line is a good way to make school information available to parents.	Y	N

Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX L
ELECTRONIC SURVEY SCRIPT

6000 Scot Line Evaluation Directory

Message: *It is time to evaluate the Scot Line. Please take this opportunity to tell us how you like this system. If you are a McDuffie parent, press 7000 to help evaluate the homework hotline feature. To help evaluate the information line feature, press 8000. If you are not a McDuffie parent, please press 9000.*

7000 Homework Hotline Evaluation for Parents:

Message: *Thank you for helping to evaluate the homework hotline. Please listen to the following question and then respond. Do you think a hotline is a good way to receive homework assignments? If you like this method, press 7777. If you do not like this method of receiving homework assignments, press 7778. Now, please press 7777 to say "Yes," or 7778 to say "No."*

7777 Message: *You have just registered a Yes vote, indicating that you think a hotline is a good way to receive homework assignments. Thank you for helping to evaluate the homework hotline.*

7778 Message: *You have just registered a No vote, indicating that you do not think a hotline is a good way to receive homework assignments. Thank you for helping to evaluate the homework hotline.*

8000 Information Line Evaluation for Parents:

Message: *Thank you for helping to evaluate the information line. Please listen to the following question and then respond. Do you think that an information line is a good way for schools to make information available to parents? If you like to receive information*

in this way, press 8888. If you do not like this method of receiving school information, press 8889. Now, please press 8888 to say "Yes," or 8889 to say "No."

8888 *You have just registered a Yes vote, indicating that you think an information line is a good way for schools to make information available to parents. Thank you for helping to evaluate the information line.*

8889 Message: *You have just registered a No vote, indicating that you do not think an information line is a good way for schools to make information available to parents. Thank you for helping to evaluate the information line.*

9000 Information Line Evaluation for Community Members:
Message: *Thank you for helping to evaluate the information line. Please listen to the following question and then respond. Do you think a system such as the Scot Line is a good way to provide information to the public? If you like this method of receiving information, press 4444. If you do not like this method of receiving information, press 4445. Now, please press 4444 to say "Yes," or 4445 to say "No."*

4444 Message: *You have just registered a Yes vote, indicating that you think this system is a good method of providing information to the public. Thank you for helping to evaluate the information line.*

4445 Message: *You have just registered a No vote, indicating that you do not think this system is a good method of providing information to the public. Thank you for helping to evaluate the information line.*

APPENDIX M
PARENT SURVEY TABULATION REPORT

SCOT LINE PARENT SURVEY TABULATION REPORT

No. of respondents 31 Date 5-9 To 5-25-95

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	10	9	1	3	6
2	11	11	8	0	0
3	9	13	7	0	0
4a	10	11	9	0	0
4b	11	9	9	1	0
4c	9	11	8	2	0
4d	14	8	8	0	0
4e	10	9	11	0	0
4f	12	6	11	1	0
5	7	12	6	3	1
6	9	6	10	3	1
7	7	5	9	3	0
8	6	12	5	2	0
9	4	12	5	4	0
10	4	11	7	3	0

Number of messages accessed from the following cells:

School News 15 Principal's Corner 14 Guidance Dept. 7

PTSO 7 Business Partner News 4 Student Club News 5

Library 1 Future 21 Prog. 1 School-to-Work Prog. 4

Parent Center 5 Sports News 11 Sports Schedule 8

Lunch Menus 11 Lunch Menu Information 4

School Improvement Council 6 Homework Assignments 17

APPENDIX N

STUDENT SURVEY TABULATION REPORT

SCOT LINE STUDENT SURVEY TABULATION REPORT 108

No. of respondents 87 Date May 24-25, 1995

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	17	14	6	5	32
2	14	16	37	5	2
3	15	11	37	6	2
4a	11	17	34	2	3
4b	9	17	42	4	1
4c	5	11	46	7	3
4d	16	16	34	3	2
4e	9	17	40	2	4
4f	9	13	46	2	3
5	5	8	35	16	10
6	8	19	20	9	17
7	14	24	9	13	13
8	13	21	12	11	15
9	17	4	5	11	35
10	17	21	13	11	12

Number of messages accessed from the following cells:

School News 23 Principal's Corner 11 Guidance Dept. 7

PTSO 2 Business Partner News 2 Student Club News 9

Library 7 Future 21 Prog. 5 School-to-Work Prog. 6

Parent Center 4 Sports News 21 Sports Schedule 21

Lunch Menus 18 Lunch Menu Information 7

School Improvement Council 5 Homework Assignments 30

APPENDIX O
TEACHER SURVEY TABULATION REPORT

SCOT LINE TEACHER SURVEY TABULATION REPORT 110

No. of respondents 29 Date 5-25-95

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	12	10	1	1	4
2	16	7	5	0	0
3	11	13	4	1	0
4a	8	15	5	0	0
4b	8	13	6	0	0
4c	8	12	7	1	0
4d	12	11	4	1	0
4e	8	12	7	0	0
4f	8	9	9	0	0
5	13	11	2	1	0
6	3	15	5	3	2
7	2	20	4	1	2
8	8	15	5	0	0
9	3	15	4	5	3
10	1	8	8	7	2
11	1	7	5	12	4

Number of messages accessed from the following cells:

School News 16 Principal's Corner 14 Guidance Dept. 7

PTSO 5 Business Partner News 3 Student Club News 5

Library 4 Future 21 Prog. 1 School-to-Work Prog. 4

Parent Center 4 Sports News 10 Sports Schedule 8

Lunch Menus 5 Lunch Menu Information 4

School Improvement Council 6 Homework Assignments 19